

DROLLERIES OF DONEGAL.

A Series of Irish Folk Stories—By Seumas MacManus. WHEN NEIL A-MUGHAN WAS TUK.

Author of "Through the Turf Smoke," "The Leadin' Road to Donegal."

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We had been in the middle of our story tellin', with all our seats drawn close together round Shemishin's big hearth fire. The storm of rain and sleet without gave us no bother, only made us enjoy the comfort of the big fire, and the great stories, far more keenly. But in the middle of an exciting story of Pandora's, a fearful adventure of his in the wilds of Georgia, when he was carrying the pack there, the latch rattled and the door burst open and into the middle of the floor stepped a man with a scragged look on his face, and out of whose clinging clothes streams of water were running and pouring over the floor. The wet hair came down on his brows and face in wet tongues, and streams were running from it. His hat drooped over all like a limp rag.

"God bless all here!" he said. "And yourself likewise," we said when we got our breaths. "Thank God!" said he, from his heart. "It's me the glad man to get a Christian roof over me head. I've been tuk."

"What? By the fairies? On such a night?" "The fairies?" Shemishin said, rebuking us. "Wouldn't take any Christian on such a night."

"They wouldn't," said the stranger, "and didn't I was tuk by Willie-the-Wisp."

"God help ye, poor man," Shemishin said, "ye had a narrow escape," and "God help ye."

"I'm martial sorry for ye, Willie," says the gentleman. "Can I help ye?"

"I dar' say ye could; but I don't expect ye would," says Willie. "It's cool comfort to go out of the wurrl' on a hungry belly. Here ye have the offer of a roomful of money an' a whole year to spend and sport it. Think of all the fun ye'd get out of a roomful of money in twelve months and a day!"

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"Well, Willie," says he, "this is the curious thing ever I have seen. I never after seen the room I couldn't fill inside five minutes, if it was as big as a deer park." So he was now sittin' by, wipin' the sweat off his face with the back of his hand when all at once he noticed the gold lowerin' in the middle an' disappearin' away like corn in the center of the mill-bopper. He lets a yell out of him, and jumps down the stairs, and there in the cellar what does he find only my brave Willie, fillin' bag after bag at a stream of gold a foot thick which was pourin' down

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"Musha, God was by ye."

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it go, without my leave. And I have an armchair at home that I want any wanst sit down in it not to be able to get out of it till I tell them."

"Your wishes are granted," says the devil. "Goody, and be ready for me this day seven years."

"I'll be ready for ye," says Willie.

Willie had a gay and a rollickin' time and no mistake after that for the seven years. He made the money spin as it was never before known to spin in Ireland. He came to be known all over the country as the greatest sporter and spender of the day. He kept race horses and stepphase horses, carriages and coaches—and everything was strapped out in solid gold. He built castles that had a window for every day of the year, and entertained kings in them. And hards and chiefs were as plentiful about them as rats. The fame of the great rich blacksmith spread over the known wurrl' of them days, and great distinguished tourists and gentry of all descriptions come flockin' from all parts and parts to the inn and to receive his hospitality—because he kept open

of the earth itself, and the fun was ten times as great, and the drinkin' ten times as great and grand. And the likes of it never had been seen afore nor never will be seen again.

But the best of things must come some time or other come to an end, and so it seemed with Willie; for these seven years passed, too. And the day the devil was due came, and on that day, just as afore, Willie, he was sittin' down till the table to dinner along with all his great distinguished guests, when the doors of the dinin' room opens and in walks me brave devil again.

"Good mornin, Willie," says he, with the same old vicious smile.

"Good mornin and good luck," says Willie, as little as ever mimowed, "won't ye sit down and have a pick of dinner with us?"

"Not me," says the devil. "You fooled me twice, but ye'll never have it to say that ye fooled me the third time. Come along," says he.

"That's mighty curt," says Willie. "It's your desire," says the devil. "Lay down the knife and fork now, and thro'."

So poor Willie had there and then to say goodby to his guests an' beg their pardon for his hasty departure, an' walk off, as hungry as he was, with the devil.

It was in the heat of summer and the sun burned down on top of the two travelers. After they'd been an hour or more walkin' Willie complained he was mighty thirsty.

"Well," says the devil, says he, "the first inn we come till, I'll let ye go in and have a drinkin'."

"Says Willie, "but I haven't got a stiver on me; me purse is as empty as Micky Meehan's marm-chist."

"Neither have I a stiver," says the Devil; "what'll ye do?"

"Why, as for that," says Willie, says he, "ye're such a nice, obligin' fella that I know ye'll oblige me in this. All you've got to do is to turn yourself intil a good piece whist I buy a throat with whisky."

"I'll do that, with a heart and a half," says the devil.

And the first inn they come up till, the devil transformed himself intil a good piece, and Willie slipped him intil his purse and closed the purse on him. Then straight back home with him Willie marched, and into his forge. He laid the purse down on the anvil, and gettin' two other strong lumps of fell's along with himself, he put sledges in their hands and told them fire away and not spare themselves. So, as heavy and fast as the three of them could, they rained the blows down upon the purse on the anvil, and every blow come down, and he yelled away; and he cried out and begged of Willie to let him out, and he'd give him more sparin'. And when Willie got all the fun himself, and his friends needed for wain day out of him, Willie released him from the purse on his promise to give him seven years more.

But poor Willie's money, which had been rosin' all this time like corn in a sieve, was now run runny now. For six of the seven years he had as gay a time and as merry as ever before; but the money run out with the sixth year, and poor Willie had no means of makin' more—for he'd sooner starve than work. His friends disappeared, too, with the money; and him that thought he could give him more sparin', he completely did as much as one single now, on lookin' round him. The seventh year, then, was a purty hard one with Willie; an' he was no ways sorry to find the end of it comin' and with it the devil—for he had got heart sick, sore and tired of the wurrl'.

And when the end of the seventh year the devil come again he found Willie, with the stick in his fist watin' him. And off Willie started along with him, this time with a heart and a half. And on ahead the both of them thrugged and thraveled for many a weary dreary mile, for further nor I could tell you, and twice further nor you could tell me, till at long and at last they

reached their journey's end, and the devil knocked on the gates and had both of them admitted in.

But, behold you, Willie wasn't long here till he tired of it and wished he was free agin. So he set about makin' himself as comfortable as he could and zocked to row with everybody in it, till they could stand him no longer and put in a petition to the devil to have him put out of here, because there'd never be no more comfort whist he'd be let remain. And the devil himself, too, found him so troublesome that he was only too glad to give in and ax the request of Willie that he'd go quietly and leave them in peace. But Willie was contrary, as always he had been, and he now refused to be main force. And when they got him out and the gates slammed on him Willie kicked up a racket outside and pegged on the gates

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"I'll do that, with a heart and a half," says the devil.

And the first inn they come up till, the devil transformed himself intil a good piece, and Willie slipped him intil his purse and closed the purse on him. Then straight back home with him Willie marched, and into his forge. He laid the purse down on the anvil, and gettin' two other strong lumps of fell's along with himself, he put sledges in their hands and told them fire away and not spare themselves. So, as heavy and fast as the three of them could, they rained the blows down upon the purse on the anvil, and every blow come down, and he yelled away; and he cried out and begged of Willie to let him out, and he'd give him more sparin'. And when Willie got all the fun himself, and his friends needed for wain day out of him, Willie released him from the purse on his promise to give him seven years more.

But poor Willie's money, which had been rosin' all this time like corn in a sieve, was now run runny now. For six of the seven years he had as gay a time and as merry as ever before; but the money run out with the sixth year, and poor Willie had no means of makin' more—for he'd sooner starve than work. His friends disappeared, too, with the money; and him that thought he could give him more sparin', he completely did as much as one single now, on lookin' round him. The seventh year, then, was a purty hard one with Willie; an' he was no ways sorry to find the end of it comin' and with it the devil—for he had got heart sick, sore and tired of the wurrl'.

And when the end of the seventh year the devil come again he found Willie, with the stick in his fist watin' him. And off Willie started along with him, this time with a heart and a half. And on ahead the both of them thrugged and thraveled for many a weary dreary mile, for further nor I could tell you, and twice further nor you could tell me, till at long and at last they

reached their journey's end, and the devil knocked on the gates and had both of them admitted in.

But, behold you, Willie wasn't long here till he tired of it and wished he was free agin. So he set about makin' himself as comfortable as he could and zocked to row with everybody in it, till they could stand him no longer and put in a petition to the devil to have him put out of here, because there'd never be no more comfort whist he'd be let remain. And the devil himself, too, found him so troublesome that he was only too glad to give in and ax the request of Willie that he'd go quietly and leave them in peace. But Willie was contrary, as always he had been, and he now refused to be main force. And when they got him out and the gates slammed on him Willie kicked up a racket outside and pegged on the gates

So poor Willie had there and then to say goodby to his guests an' beg their pardon for his hasty departure, an' walk off, as hungry as he was, with the devil.

It was in the heat of summer and the sun burned down on top of the two travelers. After they'd been an hour or more walkin' Willie complained he was mighty thirsty.

"Well," says the devil, says he, "the first inn we come till, I'll let ye go in and have a drinkin'."

"Says Willie, "but I haven't got a stiver on me; me purse is as empty as Micky Meehan's marm-chist."